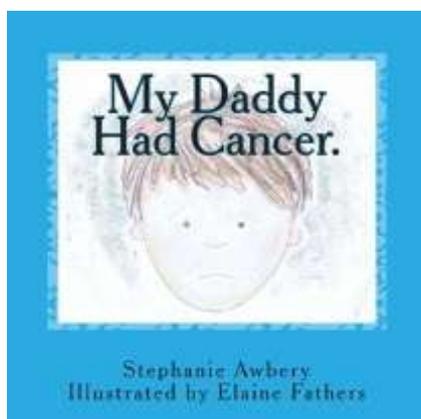


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BOOK REVIEWS

Read what people affected by cancer think about...



My daddy had cancer (2015)

Awbery S; Fathers E (illustrator)
CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform,
2015.
28pp.
ISBN 9781508549840.

Average star rating 4.1 (out of 5)

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This is the first book I have reviewed about bereavement for children. However, I am very used to reading books to my two grandsons aged six and three. This is the sort of book that any child is used to reading or having read to them; the familiar layout enables the adult to introduce the subject of illness, dying and grief. It would have to be used slowly and the suggested activities could be carried out depending on how the child is reacting at any particular time. It is also useful for anyone involved with a child who has a loved one with cancer.

It is very attractive and the illustrations are in line with other books for young children. It is in logical order and the story is very simple but well told for a small child.

I like the simplicity of this book and the fact that you can use it as you want to and bring it along with the child's other books, so you can introduce the subject gently. Very useful as an additional tool to lead into talking and counselling. It would be useful to read this and complete some of the suggested activities when the child realises their loved one is ill. It provides a good guideline for dealing with the problems of death of a close relative and I recommend it as a good resource to use alongside other activities. As suggested, it can be an ongoing resource.

In remission from womb cancer. A survivor of seven years, so hopefully cured (66-75) (September 2019)

People can read this book before bereavement to prepare for what could happen and afterwards to see what other people have been through. The language is suitable for young children. You can understand what has happened and what cancer his dad had; the book explains everything well. I like how it looks; it has good pictures and these, together with the text, describe well what the boy is saying and his emotions.

I like how the little boy tells the story about his father's cancer; I feel like we have things in common and I can rely on it. The story and pictures show you about the boy and what the family went through. Letting people know what he went through is the best thing he could do.

My father died in November 2015 (bile duct/liver cancer) 18-25) (March 2017)

This is a fantastic resource for anyone dealing with a young child who has lost a parent to cancer. It would be perfect to read with a child after the death of their parent. I imagine myself reading it with my daughter as soon as she's old enough to understand it and ask questions, and as many times as she likes afterwards. I can see it being an ongoing resource as she gets older and has more questions.

It talks about what can happen when someone gets cancer and what happened in this case, followed by ways to remember the person who has died and ways to open up the topic for discussion with the child(ren). I think it will be easy for children to understand and it uses suitable language. It looks great. The cover is simple and to the point. The title is straight forward which is ideal for a children's book. The illustrations are lovely, especially those with different facial expressions; these will help children to express their feelings if they don't want to talk out loud or are too young to be able to express themselves in words.

I really like how “black and white” the book is. It's very cleverly worded; there is no religious reference, leaving the reader open to elaborate the story based on the child and their own beliefs. It is frank and honest, which is important in helping children to understand death. It's great that there are mini “exercises” in the book to encourage children to open up and talk about their feelings.

This is such a lovely book. I know I'll find it extremely useful when my daughter is old enough. She was only 13 months old when her dad (my husband) died and this book is going to be extremely useful when it comes to helping her understand what has happened to him and answering her questions. It's very simple to understand and will allow children to explore their emotions. It is sensitive and can be worked through at the child's pace. No part of the story is essential, which means it can be tailored to the child based on what the parent/caregiver feels is relevant. This book will be a valuable tool in my house over the coming years.

I am the mother of a child whose dad died from bowel cancer and my mother died from breast cancer (18-25) (April 2016)



This book would be especially helpful to those who live with a bereaved child. It will help them to help the child understand what they are experiencing. It will also be helpful for those working closely with a bereaved child, such as teachers or a child bereavement counsellor; it will give them ideas of how to approach the topic of death and help them through as someone who has a duty of care to the child. Young children should have someone who can try to answer any questions they may have.

It will be most useful after the death of the child's father; it may cause too much distress before the death if the child does not fully understand what is about to happen. After death, it will help the child to understand why this has happened and give them some ways of dealing with the emotions to come.

The information is in a logical, easy to understand order. An explanation of the illness and death is followed by questions to try to get the child to explore their feelings, and a helpful activity at the end to get them to remember their father as they saw him. The language is easy to read and easy for children to get their head around. The colour illustrations inside are good for children but the cover could be a little more uplifting, maybe a picture of a child and a father together to show that the relationship will always exist. I would like to see pictures of a girl as well as a boy, to make girls feel as connected to the book as boys.

I like that this is a simple book and that it gives children questions to think about so that they can explore their own feelings; it is a time of confusion and uncertainty for them when they are still growing up, and this book could help them feel more in control of what is happening, feel that they are being acknowledged, and that they are not being pushed into the background.

My father had cancer (18-25) (May 2018)

I flicked through this book when I received it and was a bit nonplussed. The illustrations are not great, and the text is somewhat simplistic and very school-like. However, I was cheered by the notice at the front suggesting that the book should be read in a nurturing atmosphere to a child and is not intended for a child to read to him/herself. It could be read by anyone with a child as there are clear notes and guidelines and suggestions on how to use the book.

It is simple, clear and easy to understand with room for discussion. The language is suitable for the intended age range. The authors emphasise that it is a book to be read with a child, not by a child. The look lets it down: cheap paper, not great illustrations, no warmth, or invitation on the cover saying, "Read me". Children won't naturally be drawn to it. However, I like the picture of the funeral car complete with coffin; this is not often seen in a children's book. Fabulous thinking!

The content is very simple, but there is a lot of room for discussion and ways in to introduce new vocabulary about feelings, to explore how a child may feel. This is reinforced and supplemented by the suggestions at the front of the book about possible uses for each page. It is best read after a bereavement.

Living with cancer (myelodysplastic syndrome) and former teacher of 3-16-year-olds with SEN (46-55) (May 2017)



This book is very easy to read for any age, but it could not be read by a child on their own as advertised. It needs to be used by an adult as a conversation starter with a child and to elaborate on the words. It might be best for younger children.

It is very basic and not very exciting, but I don't dislike it. It is in a logical order. It is very minimal in the context of the story, but there are questions at the start that could/should be used as a conversation starter as the book is read with a child.

I like that it can be used with a child who is struggling with bereavement. It provides a starting point for communication and building all-important comfort to delve into tough concepts with a child. However, it is short and basic and there could have been more to the story. I understand the concept, but it is not my favourite book in this genre.

Daughter of a father lost to prostate, bone and chronic lymphocytic leukaemia (26-35) (February 2019)

This very simple story could be read by a young reader, but it should be read by the child alongside an adult. There are a few good suggestions at the front that an adult could take on board. It is best read after bereavement.

It is very easy for a child to understand. The text is simple as are the illustrations. The cover is eye catching but some of the illustrations are basic and not very appealing to children. Children at the older end of the suggested age group (two- to seven-year olds) may find it a bit babyish and will not be keen on some of the illustrations, whereas two- to three-year olds will not find them engaging enough. However, they are all in context and appropriate and if it helps one child, it has served its purpose.

This is a nice, simple book that will hopefully help a young child come to terms with the loss of a loved one. It could have had a few more pages – it seems to come to an abrupt halt. It could be useful but the parent, teacher, or whoever, should read it through first and check it is suitable for the child. I am not sure if I would choose it for any of my five grandchildren aged two to nine but there is a place for most books on that try to help a bereaved child.

Breast cancer patient with young grandchildren (46-55) (September 2017)

Further information

Why does Macmillan Cancer Support review books?

We use reviews to help us compile a list of suggested cancer books, the [Macmillan Core Book List](#). Cancer information centres and public libraries can use this list to select appropriate and relevant books for people affected by cancer.

We add reviews to the [Directory of information materials for people affected by cancer](#) so that people affected by cancer can see what others in a similar situation think about a book. You can also see details of all the books reviewed in the [Book reviews listing](#), which also has links to all the reviews.

We recruit most of our reviewers through the [Volunteering Village](#) and the [Cancer Voices Network](#), people affected by cancer who have signed up to help Macmillan Cancer Support in a number of ways. Volunteers are a vital part of our book review process; since 2007, over 1,500 Macmillan volunteers have written more than 6,000 reviews of over 500 different books.

If you are a health professional who would like to review books for us, please [email Sue Hawkins](#), Information Materials Researcher, Macmillan Cancer Support.

Information and support for people affected by cancer

If you are looking for support to help you live life with cancer, you may wish to contact one of [Macmillan's cancer information and support services](#). Or you can call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00** (Mon-Fri 9am–8pm). We have an interpreting service in over 200 languages. Just state, in English, the language you wish to use. If you are deaf or hard of hearing you can use textphone no 0808 808 0121 or Text Relay.

You can also email us using the [website enquiry form](#). Alternatively, [visit our website](#).

Feedback

If you have any comments, please [email Sue Hawkins](#), Information Materials Researcher, Macmillan Cancer Support.

We're here to help everyone with cancer live life as fully as they can, providing physical, financial and emotional support. So whatever cancer throws your way, we're right there with you.

For information, support or just someone to talk to, call 0808 808 00 00 or visit macmillan.org.uk

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